

slender, and the bracts are most of them linear lanceolate instead of lanceolate. It would be of interest to the writer to learn whether the above variety has often been met with, and whether similar variations occur in other species or genera of this order.

Since the above was written the February number of the *Torrey Bulletin* has come to hand. Reference is there made (p. 37,) to *Habenaria blephariglottis*, var. *holopetala* Torr., as having entire petals at times, and (p. 38), to a variety of *H. ciliaris*, collected during the past season in the vicinity of New York, in which the lip was either imperfectly fringed or entire, while the spur was either very short or obsolete. The figures given above, therefore, only illustrate the extremes of variation found within the limits of the genus.—HENRY G. JESUP, Hanover, N. H.

EDITORIAL.

THE need of a comprehensive index to the writings of American botanists becomes more urgent every year. What Farlow's index did for writings upon fungi, should be done for every other department of the science, and provision ought also to be made for keeping the index up to date. The index to current literature in the *Bulletin of the Torrey Club*, is valuable, and a specially interesting feature of the journal, but is necessarily restricted and imperfect. It was a most excellent idea to provide an index and abstracts of the publications sent out by the experiment stations in the form of a serial, the *Experiment Station Record*, but the multiplicity of subjects included makes it rather unhandy for the use of the specialist.

There are other bibliographical aids to historical research that are of some service, but all told, the facilities for ascertaining what has been written in America upon a particular subject are meager and annoyingly imperfect.

The need of such an index was formerly not strongly felt except by a few workers, but recently it has become the fashion (may it never depart) to include in every considerable research a more or less complete historical review, and in all matters of moment to give the connection of the observations with previously recorded facts. With the present lack of any suitable index this is often a formidable task, and is usually attended with great uncertainty, particularly in regard to American records.

Could such an admirable work as Just's *Jahresbericht* be provided for the current writings of American botanists, it would not only be

serviceable upon this side of the ocean, but would be especially welcome to investigators in other countries. Commercial publishers are willing to undertake the financial management of such serials abroad, but here probably the only way to succeed would be to have the responsibility assumed by a university having a reputation and endowment that would guarantee permanency. It is very doubtful if the income from subscriptions would meet the expense of publication.

If such a serial were established, there would still remain the necessity for an index of earlier publications. Among the various ways in which this might be accomplished, probably one of the most effective would be by co-operation through the section of botany in the American Association. It could by this means be managed so as not to be a formidable undertaking. The expense of the printing might possibly be arranged for with the Association, or the Smithsonian Institution.

The sooner the work is done the shorter the task, and the more rapid and satisfactory will be the growth of botanical science upon American soil. That it must eventually be done does not admit of doubt.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

Classification of monocotyledons.

A recent monograph by Dr. A. Engler¹ will be found especially helpful to those interested in the classification of angiosperms. It will be seen that the author's arrangement of the monocotyledons differs considerably from that of Eichler, which, with slight modification, is repeated by Goebel, and also from that of Drude. Engler divides the monocotyledons into two great divisions: (1) Those with prevailing inconstancy in the number of parts of the flower, and (2) those with complete or reduced pentacyclic flowers.

The first division includes those families in which the typical nakedness of the flower, spiral arrangement, and inconstancy in the number of parts of the flower may be observed. The arrangement is easily understood, and seems to be sustained by the facts. The different series and their families are as follows:

A. Families with a prevailing inconstancy in the number of floral parts.

I. *Pandanales*.—(Pandanaeae, Typhaceae, Sparganiaceae.)

¹ENGLER, A.—Die systematische Anordnung der Monokotyledoneen Angiospermen. Akademie der Wissenschaften. pp. 1-55. Berlin, 1892.